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SENATE MEMORIAL 86

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

Sue Wilson Beffort

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF NURSING TO COLLABORATE WITH THE NEW MEXICO CENTER FOR NURSING EXCELLENCE, THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF A SHORTAGE OF NURSING INSTRUCTORS ON THE STATUS OF NURSING IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, the United States and New Mexico are experiencing a shortage of nurses; and

WHEREAS, according to a report, *2008: Status of Nursing in New Mexico*, published by the New Mexico center for nursing excellence, the supply of nurses is not meeting the demand despite an increase in the number of registered nurses in New Mexico over the last five years; and

WHEREAS, this report states that the vacancy rate for registered nurses in acute care hospitals is ten and seven-

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1 tenths percent compared to a national vacancy rate of eight  
2 percent; and

3 WHEREAS, according to the university of New Mexico's  
4 bureau of business and economic research, the rate at which  
5 nurses retire is expected to accelerate rapidly over the next  
6 fifteen years, peaking in 2020, raising the question of whether  
7 the nursing education system has the capacity to bring new  
8 registered nurses into the work force as rapidly as current  
9 nurses retire; and

10 WHEREAS, according to the university of New Mexico's  
11 bureau of business and economic research, the number of  
12 qualified applicants accepted into nursing schools declined  
13 between 2004 and 2005, with only forty-eight percent of  
14 qualified applicants being accepted into New Mexico schools in  
15 2005; and

16 WHEREAS, if this trend continues, schools will be unable  
17 to grow their programs within the current system, structure and  
18 funding sources; and

19 WHEREAS, the New Mexico center for nursing excellence  
20 reports that twenty-one percent of associate degree nursing  
21 programs and twenty-two percent of bachelor of science nursing  
22 programs are funded with nonrecurring, soft funds; and

23 WHEREAS, the center also reports that associate degree  
24 nursing programs have a ten percent faculty vacancy rate, while  
25 bachelor of science nursing programs have a thirteen and five-

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1 tenths percent faculty vacancy rate, and on average, twenty-  
2 five percent of all nursing faculty will retire within five  
3 years; and

4 WHEREAS, the salary of associate degree nursing faculty  
5 averaged forty-four thousand four hundred sixty-two dollars  
6 (\$44,462) in 2007, compared to a community equivalent salary of  
7 seventy-one thousand five hundred dollars (\$71,500) for an  
8 associate degree nurse; and the average salary for full-time  
9 master of science nursing faculty was seventy-six thousand four  
10 hundred dollars (\$76,400) compared to eighty thousand dollars  
11 (\$80,000) for a comparably educated clinical nurse in the  
12 community; and

13 WHEREAS, in a survey, conducted by the center, of New  
14 Mexico nurse educators from public colleges and universities,  
15 all six programs that responded identified the lack of  
16 permanent funding as either a major barrier or a moderate  
17 barrier to increasing enrollment into nursing programs; and

18 WHEREAS, the disparity between the wage paid to practicing  
19 nurses and the average wage paid to full-time nursing faculty  
20 can lead to faculty being drawn out of academia and into the  
21 practice of clinical nursing; and

22 WHEREAS, over time, a lack of sufficient faculty leads to  
23 a bottleneck in the nursing education system, with qualified  
24 applicants being turned away or being put on waiting lists for  
25 admission; and

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1           WHEREAS, there is a need to assess the factors, including  
2 appropriate salaries, that are necessary to attract nurses into  
3 teaching so that schools of nursing can admit enough qualified  
4 applicants to address the nursing shortage in the state; and

5           WHEREAS, a long-term plan is needed if the state's schools  
6 of nursing are to have sufficient faculty to admit, educate and  
7 graduate nurses to join the state's health care work force; and

8           WHEREAS, the board of nursing is charged with facilitating  
9 the continued improvement of nursing education programs and  
10 with evaluating nursing programs with regard to standards and  
11 rules;

12           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
13 OF NEW MEXICO that the board of nursing be requested to  
14 collaborate with the New Mexico center for nursing excellence,  
15 the higher education department and other agencies and  
16 organizations to study the impact of a shortage of nursing  
17 instructors on the status of nursing in New Mexico; and

18           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify the funding  
19 that will be required if the state's public colleges and  
20 universities are to hire and retain an adequate number of  
21 nursing faculty; the number of qualified applicants who are  
22 turned away or put on waiting lists for admission to nursing  
23 schools; the factors that would entice current faculty facing  
24 retirement to remain on the faculty; the factors that would  
25 entice nurses who have retired from clinical practice to join

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1 the faculty of nursing schools; and other factors that will  
2 determine whether New Mexico's schools of nursing will be able  
3 to educate a sufficient number of nurses to meet the demand in  
4 the state; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify and  
6 recommend long-term, sustainable solutions to the shortage of  
7 nursing instructors at the state's schools of nursing; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of New Mexico  
9 school of nursing, the New Mexico state university school of  
10 nursing, an association representing community colleges and an  
11 association representing associate degree schools of nursing  
12 participate in the study; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and  
14 recommendations of the study be presented to the interim  
15 legislative health and human services committee by November 1,  
16 2009; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
18 transmitted to the board of nursing, the secretary of higher  
19 education and the New Mexico center for nursing excellence.